United Nations E/CN.9/2006/3

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
25 January 2006

Original: English

Commission on Population and Development
Thirty-ninth session
3-7 April 2006
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up actions to the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development

World population monitoring, focusing on international migration and development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its decision 2004/1, the Commission on Population and Development decided that the special theme for its thirty-ninth session would be international migration and development. The present report provides the basis for the Commission's deliberations.

The report addresses the demographic, social and economic aspects of international migration in relation to development. It describes recent international migration trends; examines the interactions between international migration and population growth, fertility, mortality and health; discusses the economic aspects of international migration; and concludes with an overview of policy responses at the national, regional and international levels.

The report was prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

* E/CN.9/2006/1.

06-22182 (E) 160206

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Introduction

1. In 2005, the number of international migrants in the world reached 191 million. Six out of every 10 migrants live today in developed countries and just 7 out of every 100 international migrants are refugees. Nearly half of all international migrants are female and female migrants outnumber male migrants in developed countries. Three quarters of all international migrants are concentrated in just 28 countries and 1 in every 5 international migrants lives in the United States of America.

2. Between 1996 and 2005, the proportion of Governments wishing to reduce international migration declined from 40 to 22 per cent. Since 1990, the Governments of many receiving countries have been taking measures to facilitate the inflow of the types of migrants they need, especially skilled migrants and temporary low-skilled workers. In addition, the Governments of countries of origin have become more proactive in encouraging the return of their citizens and strengthening ties with their expatriate communities so as to encourage the involvement of migrants abroad in fostering development at home.

3. The rising number of international migrants, the diversification of their origins and destinations, and the implications of international migration for development have all contributed to making international migration an issue of growing priority in the international agenda, as noted by the Secretary-General in his 2002 report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1).

4. Already in 1994, at the International Conference on Population and Development, Member States had underscored the importance of international migration and development by providing, in chapter X of the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference (United Nations, 1995), a number of objectives and a comprehensive set of actions to address the causes and implications of international migration. Thereafter, the General Assembly considered the issue of international migration and development eight times. In resolution 58/208 of 23 December 2003, the Assembly decided that in 2006 it would devote a high-level dialogue to the issue and in resolution 60/227 of 23 December 2005, it decided that the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development would be held in New York on 14 and 15 September 2006. In preparation for the High-level Dialogue, the Commission on Population and Development decided to devote its thirty-ninth session to the consideration of international migration and development.

5. This present report provides the basis for the Commission's deliberations by addressing the demographic, social and economic aspects of international migration and development. It describes recent international migration trends; examines the interactions between international migration and population growth, fertility, mortality and health; discusses the economic aspects of international migration; and concludes with an overview of policy responses at the national, regional and international levels.

I. Levels and trends of international migration

6. Between 1990 and 2005, the world gained 36 million international migrants (table 1), about half of the estimated increase between 1975 and 1990, which had

amounted to 68 million. However, this comparison is misleading because 27 million out of the 68 million gained during 1990-2005 were the result of redefining as international migrants persons who had moved within the formed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics before 1990 and who became international migrants when their States of residence gained independence in 1991.[1] Yet, even excluding those 27 million migrants, the 41 million increase between 1975 and 1990 surpassed that between 1990 and 2005. In other words, the growth rate of the number of international migrants worldwide has been slowing down.

7. This slowdown has resulted mainly from the sharp decline in the growth rate of the number of international migrants in developing countries which, when the successor States of the former Soviet Union are excluded, dropped from 2.5 per cent annually in 1975-1990 to 0.6 per cent in 1990-2005. In contrast, the growth rate of the migrant stock in developed countries remained robust, averaging 2.9 per cent annually during both 1975-1990 and 1990-2005, when the Soviet Union is excluded. As a result, by 1990 the migrant stock in developed countries had surpassed that in developing countries; and developed countries absorbed virtually all the increase in the number of international migrants between 1990 and 2005 (33 million out of 36 million).

8. These changes have produced an increasing concentration of international migrants in the developed world. Thus, the proportion of migrants in developed countries rose from 53 per cent in 1990 to 61 per cent in 2005. The shares of both Europe and Northern America, increased. Today, 1 in every 3 migrants lives in Europe and about 1 in every 4 lives in Northern America. Asia still accounts for a substantial proportion of all international migrants (28 per cent) but, like Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Oceania, it has seen its share drop.

Table 1
Estimated number of international migrants and their percentage distribution by major area, and percentage of female migrants, 1990-2005

	Number of international migrants (millions)		*Increment (millions)*	*Percentage distribution of international migrants*		*Percentage of female migrants*	
Major area	*1990*	*2005*	*1990-2005*	*1990*	*2005*	*1990*	*2005*
World	154.8	190.6	35.8	100.0	100.0	49.0	49.6
More developed regions	82.4	115.4	33.0	53.2	60.5	52.0	52.2
Less developed regions	72.5	75.2	2.8	46.8	39.5	45.7	45.5
Least developed countries	11.0	10.5	-0.5	7.1	5.5	46.2	46.5
Africa	16.4	17.1	0.7	10.6	9.0	45.9	47.4
Asia	49.8	53.3	3.5	32.2	28.0	45.1	44.7
Latin America and the Caribbean	7.0	6.6	-0.3	4.5	3.5	49.7	50.3
Northern America	27.6	44.5	16.9	17.8	23.3	51.0	50.4
Europe	49.4	64.1	14.7	31.9	33.6	52.8	53.4
Oceania	4.8	5.0	0.3	3.1	2.6	49.1	51.3

Source: Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat. *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2005 Revision* (POP/DB/MIG/Rev.2005), database in digital form, 2006.

9. The increments in the number of international migrants have been small in all developing regions, but both Latin America and the Caribbean and the group of least developed countries have seen their respective numbers of international migrants drop between 1990 and 2005, mostly because of declining numbers of refugees. In 1990, Central America had 1.2 million refugees but a successful peace process led to their full repatriation over the decade. Similarly, large numbers of refugees hosted by the least developed countries were able to return home when long-standing conflicts were resolved, particularly in Africa. Globally, these developments have resulted in a major reduction in the number of refugees under the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): from 15.9 million in 1990 to 9.2 million in 2005. Together with the 4.3 million refugees under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the total number of refugees in 2005 was approximately 13.5 million.

10. A relatively small number of countries host most of the international migrants in the world. In 1990, the 30 countries with the largest migrant populations had accounted for 75 per cent of all migrants worldwide and in 2005, 28 countries sufficed to account for that proportion. The United States headed the list in both instances, hosting 15 per cent of all migrants in 1990 and 20 per cent in 2005 (table 2). Between 1990 and 2005, 17 countries accounted for 75 per cent of the increase in the migrant stock. The United States gained 15 million migrants, and Germany and Spain followed, with gains above 4 million each. By contrast, the number of international migrants decreased in 72 countries. The largest reductions occurred in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan as a result of the repatriation of refugees from Afghanistan.

Table 2
The 20 countries or areas with the highest numbers of international migrants, 1990 and 2005

	1990			*2005*		
Rank	*Country or area*	*Number of migrants (millions)*	*As percentage of total*	*Country or area*	*Number of migrants (millions)*	*As percentage of total*
1	United States of America	23.3	15.0	United States of America	38.4	20.2
2	Russian Federation	11.5	7.4	Russian Federation	12.1	6.4
3	India	7.4	4.8	Germany	10.1	5.3
4	Ukraine	7.1	4.6	Ukraine	6.8	3.6
5	Pakistan	6.6	4.2	France	6.5	3.4
6	Germany	5.9	3.8	Saudi Arabia	6.4	3.3
7	France	5.9	3.8	Canada	6.1	3.2
8	Saudi Arabia	4.7	3.1	India	5.7	3.0
9	Canada	4.3	2.8	United Kingdom	5.4	2.8
10	Australia	4.0	2.6	Spain	4.8	2.5
11	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	3.8	2.5	Australia	4.1	2.2
12	United Kingdom	3.8	2.4	Pakistan	3.3	1.7
13	Kazakhstan	3.6	2.3	United Arab Emirates	3.2	1.7

	1990			2005		
Rank	*Country or area*	*Number of migrants (millions)*	*As percentage of total*	*Country or area*	*Number of migrants (millions)*	*As percentage of total*
14	Hong Kong SAR[a]	2.2	1.4	Hong Kong SAR[a]	3.0	1.6
15	Côte d'Ivoire	2.0	1.3	Israel	2.7	1.4
16	Uzbekistan	1.7	1.1	Italy	2.5	1.3
17	Argentina	1.6	1.1	Kazakhstan	2.5	1.3
18	Israel	1.6	1.1	Côte d'Ivoire	2.4	1.2
19	Kuwait	1.6	1.0	Jordan	2.2	1.2
20	Switzerland	1.4	0.9	Japan	2.0	1.1

Source: Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat, *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2005 Revision* (POP/DB/MIG/Rev.2005), database in digital form, 2006.

[a] Special Administrative Region of China.

11. In two thirds of all countries, international migrants account for under 10 per cent of the population. Among the 79 countries where the proportion of international migrants is higher, only 35 have populations of at least a million. Countries with at least 20 million inhabitants where international migrants constitute high shares of the population include Australia (20 per cent), Canada (19 per cent), France (11 per cent), Germany (12 per cent), Saudi Arabia (26 per cent), Spain (11 per cent) and the United States (13 per cent).

12. At the world level, the proportion of women and girls among all international migrants increased from 49 per cent in 1990 to nearly 50 per cent in 2005 (table 1). In developed countries, female migrants accounted for about 52 per cent of all international migrants over the period, but in developing countries their share was markedly lower, at 46 per cent. In developed countries, the percentage of female migrants increased slightly between 1990 and 2005. By 2005, female migrants outnumbered male migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America, Europe and Oceania, but they were still underrepresented among the migrant populations of Africa and Asia. In Europe, female migrants accounted for over 53 per cent of the migrant stock in 2005. The high proportions of female migrants in developed countries are related to the importance of family reunification as a basis for the admission of international migrants.

A. International migration in developed countries

13. Migration to developed countries remained high during 1990-2005. The estimated number of migrants in Europe increased by nearly 15 million to reach 64 million in 2005. The increase was higher in Northern America (17 million) where an estimated 44.5 million migrants lived in 2005. In Australia and New Zealand, considered jointly, the number of migrants rose by 0.2 million to 4.7 million in 2005 and in Japan, where the number of migrants reached 2 million in 2005, the increase amounted to 1.2 million.

14. Available data on migrant flows confirm that during 1990-2005, developed countries generally recorded gains over each five-year period and that migration

originating in developing countries has tended to increase as a proportion of all migration (table 3). In Canada and the United States, more than 80 per cent of all recent immigrants originate in developing countries. In Australia, data on net migration indicate that virtually all its gains from permanent migration come from developing countries and in New Zealand, gains from developing countries more than counterbalance the losses relative to developed countries associated with the high level of emigration of New Zealand citizens.

15. Of particular importance are the high shares of migrants from developing countries in the net migration gains recorded by European countries (table 3). In Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, net gains from developing countries have remained high and have counterbalanced in some periods the migration losses with respect to developed countries. In Denmark, the Netherlands and Italy, the developing-country shares of net migration have been particularly high, often surpassing 70 per cent. Somewhat lower shares have been prevalent in Belgium and Finland. In Germany, the share of developing countries in net migration rose markedly after 1995 partly as a result of the declining levels of immigration of ethnic Germans from Eastern European countries. In France and Spain, countries lacking data on emigration, the share of developing countries in migrant inflows has risen steadily, so that by 2000-2004 migrants from developing countries accounted for about two thirds of their respective migration intakes.

Table 3
Estimated average annual numbers of migrants to selected developed countries: totals and developing-country shares, 1990-1994, 1995-1999 and 2000-2004

	Average annual number of migrants (thousands)			*Average annual number of migrants from developing countries (thousands)*			*Percentage from developing countries*		
Receiving country	*1990-1994*	*1995-1999*	*2000-2004*	*1990-1994*	*1995-1999*	*2000-2004*	*1990-1994*	*1995-1999*	*2000-2004*
Immigrants									
Canada	237	204	233	186	160	194	78	79	83
United States[a]	330	743	926	182	615	761	55	83	82
United States[b]	770	746	926	615	617	761	80	83	82
Net migration									
Australia[c]	64	54	49	52	43	49	81	80	99
New Zealand	7	13	15	10	21	26	>100	>100	>100
Migrant inflows									
France	120	128	191	54	66	122	45	51	64
Spain	33	66	483	15	33	314	45	50	65
Net migration									
Belgium[c]	27	24	35	13	12	21	48	49	60
Denmark[d]	10	15	10	7	8	9	74	53	88
Finland	8	3	5	3	2	3	32	57	52
Italy	60	115	..	53	71	..	88	61	..
Netherlands	54	49	48	38	42	45	70	86	92

Receiving country	Average annual number of migrants (thousands)			Average annual number of migrants from developing countries (thousands)			Percentage from developing countries		
	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004
Norway[c]	8	11	12	5	6	12	59	51	>100
Sweden	32	10	28	18	12	19	57	>100	68
United Kingdom[c]	22	82	101	28	56	121	>100	68	>100
Net migration by citizenship									
Germany	646	201	177	175	142	119	27	71	67
Foreigners	364	84	117	112	73	83	31	87	71
Citizens	282	117	60	63	69	36	22	59	60

Source: Calculated from the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat, *International Migration Flows to and from Selected Countries: 2005 Revision* (POP/DB/MIG/FL/Rev.2005), database in digital form.

Note: Two dots (..) signify data unavailable.

[a] Data excluding the migrants legalized under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA).

[b] Data including the migrants legalized under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA).

[c] Data for the most recent period referring to 2000-2003.

[d] Data for the most recent period referring to 2000-2002.

1. Migration for family reunification to developed countries

16. Family reunification continues to be the cornerstone of migrant admissions in many developed countries, although in some key countries its relevance has been declining. During 1990-2002, 65 per cent of permanent immigrants to the United States were admitted under family preferences. In Australia and Canada, the other two major countries of immigration, the equivalent proportions were 37 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively; and in both countries, there has been a clear tendency for the share of immigrants admitted under family reunification to decline (SOPEMI, 2001 and 2005). In Europe, migration for family reunification accounted for over 70 per cent of migration to France during 1999-2002, for about 50 per cent of that to Denmark, Norway and Sweden, for about 45 per cent of migration to Switzerland and for 40 per cent of that to Austria and Portugal. The share of migration for family reunification has been lower and declining in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, where it accounted for about 25 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively, of migration flows during 1999-2002 (SOPEMI, 2003, 2004 and 2005).

2. Skilled migration in developed countries

17. In the countries of immigration, the share of immigrants admitted under the skills categories has risen in parallel to the decline in the share of immigrants admitted under the family categories (SOPEMI, 2001 and 2005). Thus, during 1990-2002, 37 per cent of the immigrants admitted to Australia were in the skills category; 49 per cent of those admitted by Canada belonged either to the skills or to the business category; and 13 per cent of immigrants to the United States were admitted under the employment preference. In all cases, the proportions of immigrants in the skills categories were higher in 2000-2002 than in 1990-2002, reflecting a rising trend. Although the data cited here include both principal immigrants admitted under the skills categories and their dependants, they

nevertheless confirm that countries of immigration are increasingly using their permanent immigration programmes as a way of attracting skilled migrants.

18. Data on the number of international migrants enumerated by censuses or registration systems and classified by educational level show that, among the countries of immigration, the number of foreign-born persons aged 25 years or over with tertiary education rose from 9.4 million around 1990 to 14.7 million around 2000 and, as a proportion of the migrant population aged 25 years or over, they constituted 41 per cent in 1990 and 44 per cent in 2000. In Europe, both the number and proportion of highly educated migrants were lower, amounting to 2.5 million in 1990 and 4.9 million in 2000, and representing 15 per cent in 1990 and 21 per cent in 2000 of the total number of migrants aged 25 years or over in the 15 member States of the European Union (EU) plus the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Slovakia and Switzerland. In Japan, the number of highly educated migrants remained at about 330,000 over the decade and accounted for about a third of all migrants over age 24 (Docquier and Marfouk, 2006).

19. About 85 per cent of all highly educated migrants in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries live in six countries: the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany and France, in order of importance. Large numbers of highly educated migrants originate in developed countries, especially Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom (Docquier and Marfouk, 2006). Among developing countries, the sources of the largest numbers of highly educated migrants to OECD countries include China, India, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea. However, the data available cannot distinguish between migrants who had been educated in the countries of origin and those educated at destination.

3. Labour migration to developed countries

20. Developed countries are increasingly allowing the admission of needed workers under temporary employment programmes, including programmes for the admission of highly skilled personnel, researchers, intra-company transferees, trainees, seasonal workers, working holiday makers, etc. Receiving countries use the flexibility of these programmes to respond to changing labour-market needs in either the highly skilled or the low-skilled categories. Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States are among the countries having such programmes, although Switzerland discontinued its seasonal-worker programme in 2002. Since 1990, the number of admissions under some of these programmes has risen markedly (SOPEMI, 2005). In Australia, they tripled between 1992 and 2000; in the United Kingdom, they doubled; and in the United States, they quadrupled. During 2000-2003, Germany admitted 332,000 temporary workers annually, including 276,000 seasonal workers; the United States admitted 233,000, of whom 31,000 were seasonal workers; Australia admitted 124,000; Canada, 90,000; and New Zealand, 58,000. During 2000-2002, annual entries of temporary workers averaged 198,000 in Japan and 133,000 in the United Kingdom.

21. Countries having temporary employment programmes targeting highly skilled persons include Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the United States. The United States has three programmes for the admission of "specialists" and one for the highly skilled. Most entries occur under the H-1B programme and during 2000-2003

they amounted to 132,000 annually. Under all programmes combined, entries averaged 201,000 annually and accounted for 86 per cent of all the entries of temporary workers over the period. Japan also admitted a high number of skilled migrants over that period, averaging 139,000 annually, representing 71 per cent of all temporary migrants. In Australia, temporary skilled migration averaged 44,000 during 2000-2003 and in New Zealand, 8,000, accounting for 35 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively, of the overall intake of temporary migrant workers in each case.

22. Since the late 1980s, a major transformation has occurred in the main poles of attraction of labour migration in Europe. Countries that in the 1960s had been the major sources of migrant workers for the labour-importing countries in the region became themselves attractive destinations as their economies prospered. Consequently, since 1990, migration flows to Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain have grown dramatically. Between 1990 and 2005, the number of international migrants in those five countries is estimated to have increased by 6.4 million, reaching 9.6 million. Particularly noteworthy has been the soaring migration to Spain since 2000 (table 3). It is estimated that between 1990 and 2005, the number of international migrants in the country increased from 0.8 million to 4.8 million, with 3.2 million added since 2000.

23. The need for workers, whether highly skilled or low-skilled, has been one of the motors driving the rising levels of migration to developed countries. Much of this migration is taking place under special programmes for the admission of temporary workers. However, in several countries it is possible for temporary migrant workers to change their status and become long-term residents, so that temporary worker programmes are in effect serving as selection mechanisms for long-term immigrants.

4. Migration to and from Eastern Europe

24. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the break-up of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s ushered in an era of increased migration within the former communist countries of Eastern Europe and made possible increased migration to the industrialized countries in the West. Some of the major East-West flows have been those of ethnic Germans, Jews and Pontian Greeks from the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and other Eastern European countries to Germany, Israel and Greece, respectively. During 1990-2002, Germany received over 4 million ethnic Germans from those countries. Similarly, nearly 600,000 Jews moved to Israel from members of CIS during 1992-2002 (United Nations, 2004).

25. Since 1991, the Russian Federation has been at the centre of varied migration flows. The outflows of ethnic groups with homelands abroad have been more than counterbalanced by an inflow of 3.7 million persons who moved to the Russian Federation during 1992-1998 from other members of CIS and the Baltic States. More recently, the Russian Federation has become the destination of growing numbers of temporary migrant workers. Between 2000 and 2004, the number of work permits issued by the Russian Federation doubled, to reach nearly 400,000. In 2004, five of the eight major countries of origin of temporary migrants to the Russian Federation were members of CIS and accounted for nearly half of the work permits issued. Other important sources of temporary workers for the Russian Federation include China, Turkey and Viet Nam.

26. There are also increasing flows of temporary workers from Eastern European countries to other countries in Europe. In 2002, for instance, over 90 per cent of the labour migration directed to Germany originated in Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland (SOPEMI, 2005). There is a growing presence of workers from Bulgaria and Ukraine in Portugal and Spain, for instance, and rising numbers of Polish workers in the United Kingdom; the United Kingdom, and Ireland and Sweden, have been the only EU member States allowing free access to their labour market to citizens of the 10 member States that joined EU in May 2004.

27. In sum, migration flows both within Eastern Europe and CIS and between Eastern European and CIS countries and the rest of the developed world has gained in dynamism and complexity since 1991. The recent expansion of EU and the decision of certain European countries to foster the migration of workers from selected Eastern European countries is setting the stage for the continued growth of East-West migration. However, the low population growth and rapid population ageing of Eastern European countries suggest that migration outflows may run their course sooner than expected.

5. Refugees and asylum-seekers in developed countries

28. Developed countries have been an important destination for migrants seeking asylum from persecution. Countries of immigration have generally allowed the admission of refugees for resettlement and of persons in need of humanitarian assistance under their immigration programmes. During 1990-2002, admissions of refugees and humanitarian cases accounted for 11 per cent of all immigrants to Australia and to the United States, and for 13 per cent of those to Canada. Resettlement of refugees has also been possible in other developed countries. Furthermore, since the 1980s, industrialized countries in the West have been receiving direct applications for asylum from large numbers of persons fleeing persecution. Those granted refugee status are allowed to stay in the receiving country over the long term. By the end of 2004, it is estimated that developed countries were hosting 3 million refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2005).

29. The number of asylum applications lodged in developed countries rose markedly in the 1990s. During 1994-2004, 5.7 million applications for asylum were received (United Nations, 2004; and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2005). Countries in Europe received 73 per cent of those asylum applications, while Canada and the United Stated jointly received 25 per cent. The rest were lodged in Australia, New Zealand and Japan. The number of asylum applications peaked in 2001 at 619,000 and has since declined, to 377,000 in 2004. Over the decade, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States were the major receivers of asylum applications. Four out of every 10 persons seeking asylum in developed countries during 1994-2004 originated in Asia, mainly in Afghanistan, Iraq and Turkey. A quarter originated in Europe, particularly in the successor States of the former Yugoslavia, and nearly a fifth came from Africa. The rest originated in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in Central American countries affected by conflict in the 1980s.

30. The proportion of asylum-seekers granted asylum varies considerably among receiving countries, but recognition rates remain low. By one estimate, in the 15 EU member States, just about a quarter of asylum applicants were granted refugee status during 1982-2001. However, persons denied asylum have not necessarily been

expelled and some have been granted permission to remain under temporary protection. Recent reductions in the number of asylum applications lodged in developed countries owe much to both the resolution of long-standing conflicts and the adoption of restrictive measures to prevent the entry of potential asylum-seekers. These include stringent visa requirements for citizens of countries generating large numbers of asylum-seekers, denial of social benefits for asylum applicants who fail to lodge an application immediately upon arrival and the deportation of rejected asylum applicants (SOPEMI, 2005). Given that EU has just completed the first phase of harmonization of asylum policies and procedures among member States, the number of asylum applications in Europe is not expected to soar again to the levels attained around 2000.

B. International migration in developing countries

31. In 2005, the number of international migrants in developing countries reached 75 million and accounted for just 1.4 per cent of their total population. Asia had 51 million migrants (excluding Japan), Africa had 17 million and Latin America and the Caribbean had 7 million. Between 1990 and 2005, Asia, excluding Japan, gained 2.3 million international migrants; Africa gained 0.7 million; and Latin America and the Caribbean lost 0.3 million. Since the international migrants included in these estimates are only those who were outside of their country of origin, low growth in the number of international migrants living in developing countries does not imply a reduction or slowdown of migration flows between developing countries, since flows of returning migrants may be important in magnitude and will cancel out other outward flows. In Africa, for instance, slow growth in the number of international migrants stems from the sharp reduction in the number of refugees (from 5.4 million in 1990 to 3 million in 2005), itself the result of a number of successful repatriations during the 1990s. In Latin America and the Caribbean as well, the repatriation of the 1.2 million Central American refugees present in 1990 to their countries of origin more than counterbalanced the rising migration flows between other countries in the region after that date. Asia also experienced an important reduction in the number of refugees, from 9.8 million in 1990 to 7.4 million in 2005. Yet that reduction was more than counterbalanced by a rise in migration to both the old and the new poles of attraction within the continent.

32. Since the 1970s, the member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have been key destinations for migrant workers. Between 1990 and 2005, the estimated number of international migrants in those six countries increased from 8.6 million to 12.8 million (table 4). However, as a result of the Gulf war in 1990-1991, there had been large outflows of migrants from both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia; consequently, by 1995, the number of international migrants in the Council countries was slightly lower than in 1990 (8.5 million versus 8.6 million). There has been a rapid rise in the number of migrants in those countries since 1995.

Table 4

Proportion of foreign workers in the labour force of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and number of international migrants in those countries, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2005

	Foreign workers in the labour force (percentage)			*Number of migrants (thousands)*			
Country	*1985*	*1995*	*2000*	*1985*	*1990*	*1995*	*2005*
Bahrain	58	60	59	137	173	219	295
Kuwait	86	83	82	1 222	1 551	996	1 669
Oman	52	64	64	327	452	573	628
Qatar	77	82	86	28_	370	406	637
Saudi Arabia	63	64	56	3 401	4 743	4 611	6 361
United Arab Emirates	91	90	90	1 008	1 330	1 716	3 212
Total	..	..	..	**6 377**	**8 620**	**8 521**	**12 801**

Sources: Girgis (2002); Gulf Cooperation Council data; and Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat, *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2005 Revision* (POP/DB/MIG/Rev.2005), database in digital form.

Note: Two dots (..) signify data unavailable.

33. Migration to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries is constituted mostly of migrant workers admitted on a temporary basis. The economies of the Council countries are highly dependent on a foreign workforce and migrants constitute very high proportions of the labour force, ranging from 56 per cent in Saudi Arabia to 90 per cent in the United Arab Emirates in 2000. Despite the stated goal of substituting foreign workers by nationals, Governments of the Council countries have been unable to reduce significantly the share of foreign workers in their labour force. Worker migration to the Council countries continues to involve a majority of men, so that in 2005 females accounted for just 29 per cent of all migrants even though considerable numbers of female workers have been heading to the Council countries since the late 1970s to work in female occupations (for example, nursing, teaching and domestic work).

34. Starting in the late 1970s, migrants to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries increasingly originated in countries of Southern and South-eastern Asia, including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Data on outflows from those countries indicate that the average annual number of migrant workers leaving from them generally increased between 1990-1994 and 2000-2003 (table 5). In recent years, the Philippines has been the origin of the largest outflows of migrant workers, followed by Indonesia and India, and Sri Lanka and Thailand. Women predominate among migrant workers from Sri Lanka and Indonesia. In the early 1980s, the majority of migrants from the countries listed above had gone to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries but the emergence of new poles of attraction among the rapidly industrializing economies of Eastern and South-eastern Asia brought about a diversification of destinations. By the early 1990s, there were already important concentrations of migrant workers in Brunei Darussalam, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore, originating mostly in Asia. These countries were later joined by the Republic of Korea and Thailand, and even more recently by China. In 1996, there were 1.7

million migrants working in six countries and one area of the region (table 6), a number that grew to nearly 2 million by 2001. Including migrant workers in Singapore and Thailand makes the most recent figure rise to 3.2 million. Clearly, the number of migrant workers in Eastern and South-eastern Asia remains sizeable despite the reductions in foreign workers brought about by the effects of the financial crisis of 1997.

Table 5
Average annual number of migrants leaving for employment abroad and percentage female, selected countries in Asia, 1990-1994, 1995-1999 and 2000-2003

	Number of migrant workers departing (thousands)			*Percentage female*	
Country	*1990-1994*	*1995-1999*	*2000-2003*	*1995-1999*	*2000-2003*
Bangladesh	174	263	..	..	..
India	377	360	297	..	..
Indonesia	118	328	387	69.0	79.2
Pakistan	145	118	130	..	..
Philippines	489	746	867	..	..
Sri Lanka	52	165	195	70.4	66.1
Thailand	87	193	165	12.2	16.8
Viet Nam	..	13	47	..	..
Total	**1 422**	**2 186**	**2 087**		

Sources: International Labour Organization International Labour Migration database, accessed 10 January 2006; and *World Population Monitoring, 1997* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XIII.4), table 25.

Note: Two dots (..) signify data unavailable.

Table 6
Number of foreign workers in selected countries of Eastern and South-eastern Asia, 1996-2002
(Thousands)

Country or area	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
China	80	82	83	85	..	60	..
Hong Kong SAR of China	164	171	181	194	213	235	..
Indonesia	49	35	33	21	15	20	..
Japan	610	630	660	670	710	740	..
Malaysia	745	1 472	1 128	819	800	806	..
Philippines	4	6	5	6	6	6	..
Republic of Korea	81	105	75	92	123	129	137
Singapore	..	..	..	530	612	590	590
Thailand	..	357	160	174	176	623	487
Total	**1 733**	**1 386**	**1 197**	**2 591**	**2 655**	**3 209**	..

Sources: Iguchi (2004) and country reports presented at the Workshop on International Migration and the Labour Market in Asia, organized by the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, Tokyo, 5 and 6 February 2004.

Note: Data for Japan include overstayers, trainees and highly skilled migrants. Two dots (..) signify data unavailable.

35. In Africa, the number of refugees declined from 5.4 million in 1990 to 3 million in 2005. Consequently, the number of migrants, excluding refugees, increased from 11 million to 14 million during the period. Increases of 100,000 migrants or more were recorded by 10 countries. In Mozambique, Somalia and the Sudan, the increases resulted from the repatriation of refugee populations. In Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Nigeria, sizeable increases in the migrant stock were not related to the movement of refugees. In Burkina Faso, the increase was associated with the return of migrant workers and their descendants from Côte d'Ivoire.

36. In South Africa, the end of apartheid in 1994 caused important shifts in migration to and from the country. The emigration of South African skilled workers to developed countries has risen and has not been fully counterbalanced by inflows of skilled migrants from the rest of Africa. The mining sector of South Africa continues to rely on foreign workers but both the overall number of workers in the mines and the number of workers of foreign origin have been declining since 1990. In 2000, there were 131,000 foreign workers in the mines of South Africa, accounting for 57 per cent of the workforce in that sector, a higher proportion than in 1990 (47 per cent). South Africa has also been receiving sizeable numbers of asylum-seekers in recent years.

37. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the traditional destinations of migrants in the region, namely, Argentina and Venezuela, experienced economic difficulties at various points since 1990 that led to sizeable return flows of former migrants or the outright emigration of their citizens. Among the countries in the region that gained significant numbers of migrants between 1990 and 2005, Chile stands out because its migrant stock nearly doubled, reaching 231,000 in 2005. Sizeable increases in

the migrant stock occurred also in Bolivia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Panama and Puerto Rico. Altogether these countries have gained about half a million migrants since 1990, mostly originating within the region. However, intraregional migration is low compared with emigration flows from Latin America and the Caribbean to other regions, especially Northern America where the United States is still the major destination of migrants from the region. In 2000, the United States census enumerated 18 million persons born in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, nearly 2.3 million emigrants from the region were living in the 15 EU member States, Norway and Switzerland and 232,000 in Japan (SOPEMI, 2005). A notable development is the recent increase in migration from the region to Spain, particularly from Ecuador, Colombia, Argentina and the Dominican Republic, in order of importance.

38. All developing regions have experienced significant migrant outflows directed to developed countries. In recent years, Asian migrants have accounted for about a third of the immigration to the United States and half of that to Australia and Canada. Asians also figure prominently in highly skilled migration and student migration to those destinations. In Europe, the United Kingdom is a major receiver of migrants from the Indian subcontinent; and migration to several European countries from Asian countries other than Turkey has been increasing. In 2002, the United Kingdom was hosting 420,000 migrants from 11 countries in Southern and South-eastern Asia. Germany had another 302,000 and Italy 240,000. Similarly, Asian migration to Japan and the Republic of Korea has been rising. In 2002, Japan hosted 1.3 million migrants from the 11 countries mentioned and the Republic of Korea had 156,000 (SOPEMI, 2005).

39. Migration from Africa to developed countries continues to be shaped by cultural ties and the colonial past. France has a large number of migrants originating in Northern Africa, particularly in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. In addition, 6.5 per cent of its migrant population originates in sub-Saharan Africa. In Portugal, a fifth of all migrants are from sub-Saharan Africa. In OECD countries, 5 per cent of migrants (about 4 million) come from sub-Saharan Africa, with Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa as the main countries of origin (SOPEMI, 2005). In addition, migration from Western Africa to Spain is rising.

C. Irregular migration

40. Irregular migration is, by its very nature, difficult to estimate. It is not known how many migrants in an irregular situation there are in the world. The global estimates of international migrants presented in table 1 include migrants in an irregular situation because they are mostly based on census counts where a legal status in the country of residence is not a prerequisite for enumeration. The 2000 census of the United States, for instance, enumerated an estimated 8.5 million undocumented migrants (Passel, 2002) and more recent data show that that figure had likely increased to 10.3 million by 2005 (Passel, 2005). It is thought that Europe, particularly Southern Europe, also hosts a large number of migrants with irregular status. Overall, their numbers may range from 7 million to 8 million, fluctuating as a result of regularization programmes (Papademetriou, 2005). Although migrants with an irregular status are also common in developing countries, data with which to estimate their number are usually lacking. In Japan and the Republic of Korea, however, the number of visa overstayers provides an

indication of the numbers involved. In 2001, Japan estimated 224,000 overstayers and the Republic of Korea, 255,000. More often, unauthorized migrants cross poorly controlled borders and merge with the local population. Other sizeable groups of irregular migrants in Asia include citizens of Bangladesh and Nepal living in India; Afghans in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan; Indonesians and Filipinos in Malaysia; and migrants from Myanmar in Thailand (United Nations, 2004).

41. Since 1990, Governments have increased their efforts to prevent irregular migration by tightening border security, repatriating migrants with irregular status and curtailing the social services available to them. Given that irregularity often arises because the channels for legal migration are not well developed and host countries realize they need the services of migrant workers, regularization programmes have commonly been used to manage irregular migration. During the 1990s, at least 19 regularization programmes had been undertaken, including one in Gabon, one in Venezuela, three in Costa Rica and the rest in European countries. Over 1.5 million migrants regularized their status through such programmes. Since 2000, 14 additional regularization programmes have been carried out: one in Argentina, one in Venezuela, two in the Republic of Korea, and the rest in Europe, particularly in Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. These programmes have regularized the status of 2 million migrants and received about 900,000 additional applications that have yet to be processed.

II. Demographic and social aspects of international migration

A. International migration and population change

42. Populations change because of births, deaths and net migration. In developing countries, net migration is generally still low compared with the excess of births over deaths. By contrast, given the low fertility levels prevailing in the more developed regions, net migration has become the major driving force behind their population growth, accounting for half of that growth in 1990-1995, two thirds in 1995-2000 and three quarters in 2000-2005. If current trends continue, between 2010 and 2030 net migration will likely account for virtually all the population growth in more developed regions (table 7). Thereafter, a net migration gain of 2.2 million migrants annually is not expected to counterbalance the excess of deaths over births projected for the more developed regions.

Table 7
Role of international migration as a component of population growth, by major area, 2000-2005, 2010-2015 and 2045-2050

	Annual net migration (millions)			*Annual births minus deaths (millions)*		
Major area	*2000-2005*	*2010-2015*	*2045-2050*	*2000-2005*	*2010-2015*	*2045-2050*
Less developed regions	-2.6	-2.2	-2.2	74.9	75.3	37.1
More developed regions	2.6	2.2	2.2	1.0	0.0	-3.4
Least developed countries	0.2	-0.2	-0.3	17.0	20.1	22.1
Africa	-0.5	-0.3	-0.3	19.1	22.0	23.1
Asia	-1.3	-1.2	-1.2	47.2	45.3	11.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	-0.8	-0.6	-0.6	8.5	7.7	2.3
Northern America	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.8	1.7	0.4
Europe	1.1	0.7	0.7	-1.1	-1.6	-3.2
Oceania	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.1

Source: World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision. CD-ROM Edition — Extended Dataset. Sales No. E.05.XIII.12.

43. Europe's population would have been decreasing since 1995 had it not been for net migration. Despite averaging some 1.1 million migrants annually since 1995, international migration has not been able to prevent population reductions in Europe since 2000 and will likely continue to fall short in counterbalancing the excess of deaths over births projected for the coming decades. As a result, Europe's population is expected to decrease by 75 million from 2005 to 2050, passing from 728 million to 653 million. Without migration gains, the projected reduction would amount to 119 million.

44. Migration has also been making a major contribution to the population growth of Northern America and Oceania. In Northern America, net migration accounts currently for 44 per cent of population growth and this share is expected to attain 50 per cent by 2020-2025 and 78 per cent by 2045-2050. With projected net migration averaging 1.3 million annually, the population of Northern America is expected to increase by 107 million between 2005 and 2045, rising from 331 million to 438 million. Without migration, the population would increase by just 22 million.

45. In Oceania, net migration accounts for 24 per cent of population growth and this share will likely remain below 50 per cent until 2050. With a projected annual migration gain averaging about 93,000, the population of Oceania is expected to rise from 33 million in 2005 to 48 million in 2050. In the absence of migration, the expected population in 2050 would be close to 42 million.

46. Although the other major areas — Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean — have been experiencing net migration losses since 1950, migration has generally not reduced their population growth significantly. During 2000-2005, net emigration reduced population growth by 2.4 per cent in Africa, 2.7 per cent in Asia and 9.5 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the reduction of population growth associated with net emigration is expected to increase as fertility continues to decline. By 2045-2050, net emigration could be reducing population

growth by nearly 25 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean and by 11 per cent in Asia. Only for Africa are the expected levels of net emigration unlikely to reduce population growth by more than 2 per cent.

47. At the country level, the contribution of international migration to population growth varies considerably. In half of the 228 countries or areas of the world, net migration contributed less than 15 per cent to increasing or decreasing population growth during 2000-2005. Among the 203 countries or areas with growing populations, net migration accounted for more than 50 per cent of population growth in 33, 20 of which were in Europe and 7 in Asia. In 21 countries with growing populations, net migration accounted for from 17 to just under 50 per cent of population growth.

48. Migration can also reduce population growth. In 48 countries with growing populations, net emigration reduced population growth by more than 15 per cent. In 25 of them, the reduction ranged from 15 to just under 50 per cent, and in 23 the reduction surpassed 50 per cent. The latter group comprised mainly small countries, especially island States, 11 of which were in Latin America and the Caribbean, 6 in Oceania and 4 in Africa. In addition, during 2000-2005, the population of 19 countries decreased and in all but three of them — the Czech Republic, Hungary and the Russian Federation — net migration was negative, implying that it had either caused the reduction of population or exacerbated it.

49. International migration affects not only the size and growth of populations, but also their composition by age, since migrants tend to be younger than the population at destination. Sustained in-migration over lengthy periods can therefore slow population ageing and lower dependency ratios. However, for this effect to be significant, it is necessary to sustain high levels of net in-migration for lengthy periods. That has been the experience of the small labour-importing countries of Asia, such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. However, in countries with larger populations, the impact of international migration on age structures has generally been modest. Therefore, although international migration can play a role in mitigating population decline or slowing population ageing, it cannot reverse those trends unless its volume increases markedly. Simulations indicate, for instance, that in order to keep constant the size of its working-age population, Europe would have to increase its net migration intake fourfold.

B. Migration and fertility

50. Because migrants tend to be concentrated in the reproductive ages and to have different fertility levels than those of the host population, migration can affect the overall fertility levels of receiving countries. Migrants to developed countries, particularly those originating in developing countries, tend to have higher fertility than natives. Over time, however, the fertility of migrants tends to converge to that of natives, as migrants adapt their preferences and behaviour to those of the host society. Evidence supporting such adaptation has been found in many contexts, both in developed and in developing countries. In addition, the evidence suggests that migrant women tend to have lower fertility than women remaining in the countries of origin, indicating that migration is selective. Migration may also affect the timing of fertility over a woman's life, since migrants may postpone having children while they prepare for migration and then catch up after they settle at destination.

51. Analysis of fertility by birth order indicates that there are considerable variations among migrant populations in respect of how fast they adapt to the fertility patterns of host societies. In Sweden, for instance, the timing of first births is similar between Swedish and foreign women (Andersson, 2004). In the United States, the probabilities of having a second child among Mexican-born women who already have a child resemble those of native women of Mexican origin (Carter, 2000). In France, the evidence suggests that the speed of fertility convergence depends on the age at migration. During 1991-1998, migrant women had a total fertility of 2.5 children per woman, whereas native French women had 1.7 children per woman on average. However, migrant women who had entered France before age 13 had only slightly higher fertility than native French women (under 0.4 additional births on average), whereas those aged 25-29 at the time of migration had markedly higher fertility than native French women.

52. The fertility of migrants is not always higher than that of natives. In Australia, for instance, women admitted as part of the skilled migration stream have lower fertility than natives, but those admitted under the refugee and family streams have higher fertility than natives. The increasing selectivity of migration in terms of skills may therefore result in a faster convergence of the overall fertility levels of migrants to those of natives.

53. Both because international migrants have higher fertility and because it is common for them to be more concentrated in the reproductive ages than non-migrants, the proportion of all births accounted for by migrants often surpasses the proportion of migrants in the population. In 2000, that was the case in most of the major receiving countries in Europe, including Austria, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (SOPEMI, 2003). Furthermore, births to migrants can account for substantial proportions of all births. In 2004, births to foreign-born women constituted nearly 20 per cent of all births in the United Kingdom and 23 per cent of those in the United States in 2000. Births to foreign women constituted close to 14 per cent of all births in Spain in 2004; and in 2000, children who were foreigners at birth accounted for 49 per cent of all births in Luxembourg and nearly 23 per cent in Switzerland. This secondary effect of migration on population growth contributes to slow population ageing. However, in most developed countries, this effect is moderate because births to migrant women tend to constitute low proportions of all births. Thus, around 2000, the proportion of births to foreign women was below 5 per cent in Finland, Hungary, Italy, Japan and Portugal and ranged from 5 to 15 per cent in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden (SOPEMI, 2005). Furthermore, although the evidence suggests that the proportion of all births accounted for by migrants has tended to increase in the major receiving countries of Europe, this is not sufficient to produce a sustained increase in overall fertility, the main antidote to population ageing.

C. Migration and health

54. The interrelations between international migration and population health are complex. At the individual level, migrants are generally selected for good health, since health status determines who is able to migrate. Furthermore, policies on the admission of migrants often reinforce this selectivity by requiring potential migrants to undergo medical examinations before being admitted. Even unauthorized

migrants are likely to be positively selected in terms of health status because good health is an asset in facing the risks associated with clandestine migration. Although systematic information on the health status of migrants is sparse, the evidence available confirms that the health of international migrants is often better than that of the average person of similar age in both sending and receiving countries (McKay, Macintyre and Ellaway, 2003).

55. The health of migrants may be affected by the migration experience. By changing place of residence, migrants become exposed to the epidemiological risks in the area of destination. Migrant workers in particular, who tend to be concentrated in occupations that are difficult and physically demanding, may be subject to above-average risks of occupational-related injury or death. Lack of familiarity with working conditions in the country of destination and language barriers may increase those risks. In many receiving countries, accident and injury rates are higher among the foreign-born than among native workers (International Organization for Migration, 2005). Furthermore, when migrant workers have to live in collective dwellings, separated from their families for long periods, they are more likely to engage in risky behaviours. The rapid spread of HIV among mine workers in Southern Africa provides a worrisome example of such increased vulnerability.

56. Of particular concern are the risks to which some female migrants may be exposed by virtue of their working conditions. Domestic workers, in particular, may be prone to exploitation, given their isolation and dependence on their employers. Reports of mistreatment of female migrants in domestic service are frequent. There is also concern about the health status of migrant women working as entertainers and of those who are victims of trafficking.

57. The majority of female migrants, however, are not in especially vulnerable situations. Yet, because migrant women are often the main seekers of health care for themselves and their families, their access to appropriate services may be hindered by language and cultural barriers. There is some evidence suggesting that even in developed countries where health-care services are available to migrants, women have difficulty accessing appropriate reproductive health care for themselves and medical care for their children.

58. Risks of physical harm are typically highest when migration occurs clandestinely or under forced conditions. As border controls have tightened, migrants attempting to enter a country clandestinely may have to cross inhospitable territory on foot, embark on unsafe vessels for dangerous sea voyages or hide in dangerous containers to avoid detection. These practices have resulted in more frequent reports of migrant deaths. Once at destination, migrants who remain in an irregular situation may face further health risks associated with unsafe working conditions and with their reluctance to seek medical treatment because of fear of detection and deportation.

59. From the perspective of receiving countries, international migrants are generally considered potential vectors for the transmission of infectious disease, most recently HIV/AIDS. A common policy response has been to prevent the admission of infected migrants. An inquiry conducted among 144 countries during 1999-2002 indicated that 104 of them had imposed some kind of HIV-related travel restrictions, the majority having done so for persons intending to stay at least three months (Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe, 2002). However, such measures have failed to reduce the international spread of infectious disease because it is tourists and

returning nationals who tend not to be subject to medical control, who are often the sources of infection.

60. Another concern of receiving countries is the cost of health-care services for migrants, particularly when migrants are in an irregular situation. Some countries have restricted the provision of health care for newcomers, especially unauthorized migrants. The effects of such policies are a matter of debate since the promised cost reductions may not materialize if lack of preventive care for migrants leads to overuse of costly emergency treatment (International Organization for Migration, 2005).

61. From the perspective of countries of origin, returning migrants may be vectors of infection, agents for the dissemination of health information or models for behavioural change. The evidence available relates mostly to the spread of HIV by returning migrants, particularly single individuals or persons whose spouses stayed in the country of origin. Yet, international migration may also affect health prospects in countries of origin if it involves the departure of needed health personnel. Of particular concern is the large outflow of nurses and other health professionals from the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa where their services are sorely needed.

III. Economic impact of international migration on receiving countries

62. The economic consequences of international migration for receiving countries revolve around two main issues: (a) the impact of migrants on the wages and employment opportunities of native workers and (b) the net fiscal balance associated with international migration, since migrants pay taxes but also increase public expenditures on health, education and other public goods and services.

63. According to neoclassical economic theory, by increasing labour supply, migration puts downward pressure on wages and may produce an increase in the unemployment of non-migrants, provided labour is homogeneous within and across countries. However, in reality, the skill composition of international migrants usually differs from that of non-migrants and instead of competing with the latter, migrants complement them in the labour market. Low-skilled migrant workers, in particular, tend to work in jobs that non-migrants are not attracted to, at least at the going wage. That is the case for manual jobs in agriculture, mining and construction and a variety of low-paying jobs in the service sector (for example, domestic work, childcare, the care of the elderly, cleaning, food processing, etc.). By one estimate, in the mid-1990s, as many as 70 per cent of recent migrants from developing countries to OECD countries were employed in jobs that non-migrants preferred to avoid (World Bank, 1997). Similarly, skilled migrants are usually admitted to fill existing labour shortages, especially in information technology and the health sector. By offering skills that are in short supply and services that non-migrants are not willing to provide at prevailing wages, international migrants contribute to the smooth functioning of the labour market.

64. Available evidence indicates that the impact of international migrants on employment and wages is weak. A majority of studies, using different methodologies and relating to diverse settings, point to this conclusion.[2] A set of

studies conducted in the United States indicate that, even at the local level, in areas with high proportions of migrants, the effects of migration on wages and employment opportunities are small. These effects may be greater for those competing directly for the jobs taken by migrants, that is to say, other international migrants or non-migrants with similar levels of education and experience (Smith and Edmondson, 1997; Borjas, 2003). Panel studies corroborate that migrants in the United States act as substitutes for low-skilled workers at destination and reduce the wages of those workers (World Bank, 2006). However, because the share of low-skilled national workers has been declining in most high-income countries, the downward pressure that growing numbers of low-skilled migrants would have on average wages is low.

65. When wages are relatively inflexible, an inflow of migrants may affect employment levels rather than wages. Studies on the impact of migrants on the labour force in Europe suggest that increased migrant inflows are associated with a decline in the employment of non-migrants, particularly the low-skilled; but other studies show that migration reduces the unemployment of non-migrants over the long run, possibly through the increased consumption by migrants and the resulting increases in labour demand (World Bank, 2006). Simulations of the effects of enlargement of EU from 15 to 25 member States suggest that, although migration flows from the new to the old member States might increase once restrictions to free movement are lifted, wages and employment would be minimally affected even in the two countries likely to experience the largest inflows, namely, Austria and Germany (Hille and Straubhaar, 2001; Boeri and Brücker, 2000). Gains to receiving countries will be larger if the skills of international migrants promote innovation and development or if international migrants use their entrepreneurial skills to set up new businesses. In the traditional countries of immigration and in a growing number of European countries, foreigners are more likely than nationals to establish their own businesses (SOPEMI, 2004). Thus, immigration not only increases the supply of labour but also contributes to job creation.

66. With respect to overall economic growth, available evidence indicates that the net impact of international migration is positive but small relative to the national income of developed countries. In the United States, it has been estimated that a 10 per cent increase in the number of migrant workers would increase gross domestic product (GDP) by between 0.04 and 0.13 per cent, equivalent to an absolute increase ranging from 1.1 billion to 9.5 billion United States dollars (Smith and Edmondson, 1997). In the case of Europe, simulation models suggest that a 1 per cent increase in the proportion of migrant workers would increase GDP by between 0.30 and 0.75 per cent (Brücker, 2002). In yet another study focusing on the global level, an increase of temporary labour migration equivalent to 3 per cent of the labour force in developed countries would produce an increase of about 0.6 per cent in world GDP (Walmsley and Winters, 2003). This study suggests that developing countries would benefit the most, particularly from an increase of low-skilled emigration, mainly because of the higher incomes their emigrants would earn abroad and the resulting rise in remittances. Furthermore, incomes would also rise in the receiving countries because of higher returns to capital and an increase in fiscal receipts.

67. As for the net fiscal effect of international migration on receiving countries, few firm conclusions can be drawn from cross-sectional studies that focus on fiscal impacts at a single point in time. Their findings depend greatly on the types of

revenues and expenditures considered and on the assumptions made about average migrant incomes. In the United Kingdom, a study estimated that in 1999/2000, international migrants made a net fiscal contribution of approximately 2.5 billion British pounds (Gott and Johnston, 2002); in the United States, a similar study, focusing on two States with high immigration, found that migrants were a fiscal burden at the local and State levels, but made net positive contributions at the federal level (Smith and Edmondson, 1997).

68. Regarding the dependency of international migrants on welfare, it has been found to be similar to or lower than that of non-migrants in Germany, Greece, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom, but higher than that of non-migrants in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Welfare use depends on socio-economic and demographic characteristics, and international migrants differ from non-migrants in terms not only of skills and earnings, but also of age and family status, thus confounding comparisons across broad groups. Among international migrants, the propensity for using welfare also depends on admission status.

69. To assess properly the fiscal impact of international migration, a longer time frame is needed, since the longer migrants stay in a country, the more likely they are to have a secure working status and contribute positively to the fiscal balance. For the United States, use of a dynamic general accounting model to estimate the current value of all future tax payments and expenditures related to the foreign-born and their children, under assumptions about future population trends, changes in the composition of the foreign-born population and changes in fiscal policy, shows that over the medium term, migrants and their descendants bring net fiscal gains. When the second generation is included, each international migrant makes a net fiscal contribution of US$ 80,000 (Smith and Edmondson, 1997). Studies conducted in Europe also show that international migrants can contribute substantially to relieving the fiscal burden of future generations in rapidly ageing populations. In Germany, a net inflow of 200,000 persons per year could relieve the net tax burden of future generations by 30 per cent.

70. In sum, the net economic impact of international migration is generally positive for receiving countries. Although the presence of international migrants may have a small adverse effect on the wages of non-migrants, it does not raise unemployment and it usually produces net fiscal gains for receiving countries in the medium to long term.

IV. Economic impact of international migration on countries of origin

71. The key question with respect to the economic impact of international migration on countries of origin is whether it fosters or hampers economic development. It is generally accepted that migration can reduce labour-market pressures in countries with labour surpluses; promote the transfer of knowledge and skills through return migration and successful reintegration into the home society; and, through the flow of remittances, improve the situation of the families of migrants remaining in the country of origin.

72. With regard to migration's beneficial effects on the labour market of countries of origin, existing evidence suggests that, given current levels of international migration, it can have only a very modest impact on the labour market (United Nations, 2004). Only in small countries with large expatriate populations can the beneficial effects of emigration on the labour market be substantial. However, although the effects of international migration may be small at the national level, they can be important at the community level.

73. The other beneficial effect of migration stems from the fact that the salaries migrants earn abroad are higher than those they would earn at home and from their increased capacity to save and remit part of their earnings home. According to the World Bank, officially recorded remittances rose to US$ 226 billion in 2004.[3] About 64 per cent of these (US$ 145 billion) were received by developing countries. In absolute terms, the main receiving countries were India (US$ 21.7 billion), China (US$ 21.3 billion), Mexico (US$ 18.1 billion) and the Philippines (US$ 11.6 billion). As a proportion of GDP, remittances were most significant in Tonga (31 per cent), the Republic of Moldova (27 per cent), Lesotho (26 per cent) and Haiti (25 per cent). The total amount of actual remittances may be larger, since these estimates do not include transfers through informal channels.

74. The amount of remittances to developing countries is currently larger than official development assistance (ODA) and is second only to flows of foreign direct investment (FDI) (International Organization for Migration, 2005). Remittances are beneficial because, unlike other international financial flows, they are received by low- and middle-income families. Remittances also play a role in alleviating foreign exchange constraints for the countries of origin of migrants and some countries have used them as security to obtain preferential rates when borrowing in the international financial markets. Furthermore, remittances have the potential for being counter-cyclical, rising during economic downturns and thus providing stability during economic crises (World Bank, 2006). Remittances may cause the appreciation of the currency of countries of origin and make the production of cash crops and manufacturing less profitable but the evidence available suggests that this effect is generally a weak one (World Bank, 2006).

75. The effect of remittances on long-term economic growth is still inconclusive. To the extent that remittances finance education, health and increase investment, they might propel growth. To the extent that they increase consumption, they may increase per capita income levels, and reduce poverty and income inequality, even if they do not directly impact growth. Remittances are likely to be used more effectively in countries with a good investment environment, sound financial and legal systems, and trustworthy institutions. There is evidence suggesting that, in economies with underdeveloped financial systems, remittances alleviate credit constraints and contribute to economic growth (World Bank, 2006). In general, households with migrants have a higher propensity to save and invest than have non-migrant households. Remittances enable migrant households to invest in income-generating activities and evidence is growing regarding the entrepreneurship of migrants and their families in countries of origin. In addition, through migrant associations in receiving countries, funds may be pooled to support development projects in the communities of origin (Taylor, 1999; United Nations, 2004). Government policies to promote the use of remittances in productive activities, including by matching contributions to community development projects funded by remittances, have proved beneficial.

76. Although evidence is still limited, it suggests that remittances contribute to reducing the incidence and severity of poverty in low-income countries. A study relating poverty levels in 71 developing countries to mean income and a measure of income inequality showed that a 10 per cent increase in per capita remittances led to a 3.5 per cent reduction in the proportion of people living in poverty (World Bank, 2006). Findings on the impact of remittances on income inequality are less conclusive.[4] According to some studies, remittances go disproportionately to the better-off and increase inequality. In other cases, remittances go to poorer households and reduce income disparities. Differences in outcomes may depend on both geography and timing. Proximity to high-income countries reduces the costs of migration and allows poorer households to send migrants abroad and to benefit from remittances. Furthermore, the longer emigration has been going on, the more likely it is that migrant networks will have developed and that they may reduce the costs of migration, allowing poorer persons to migrate and thus reducing income disparities.

77. The loss of skilled personnel through emigration raises concerns because skilled workers are needed to provide certain key public services, including education and health, and because skilled workers may be essential to increasing productivity and economic growth. Furthermore, countries of origin lose the investment made in training the skilled workers who emigrate as well as their future contributions to public revenues. Although concern over the loss of highly skilled workers is shared by developed and developing countries alike, developed countries are more likely to attract highly skilled migrants to replace those who have left. Two recent studies confirm that in most OECD member States, the number of international migrants with tertiary education exceeds the number of their highly educated natives who have emigrated to other OECD countries (SOPEMI, 2005; Docquier and Marfouk, 2006), that is to say, most OECD countries have experienced net gains of highly skilled persons.[5]

78. Among non-OECD countries, the number and proportion of highly skilled emigrants vary greatly. Small countries in Africa and the Caribbean have the highest proportions of emigrants among the highly skilled. For instance, more than 70 per cent of the highly educated population born in Guyana, Jamaica, Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago were living in OECD countries around 2000; similarly, Angola, Cyprus, Fiji and Mauritius had over 50 per cent of their educated population living abroad (SOPEMI, 2005). Even in countries with more highly skilled persons, the proportion of those living abroad could be high for specific occupations. For instance, there are more doctors born in Ghana and the Philippines who are abroad than in their respective countries.

79. The emigration of skilled persons may have the positive effect of stimulating non-migrants at origin to pursue higher education in the hope of migrating one day. If the increases in human capital thus induced surpass the losses, a net gain will accrue. Beine, Docquier and Rapoport (2003) suggest that the losses due to emigration will exceed their positive impacts in countries with high proportions of highly educated persons abroad (over 20 per cent), but countries with lower levels of skilled emigration and low levels of adult education, such as Brazil and India, could benefit. Schiff (2006) notes that in order to realize such a gain, resources may have to be allocated to education to the detriment of other sectors, such as health, so that the net gain from human capital formation induced by skilled emigration may not be as high as expected and may not be sustainable. India, for instance, has

experienced large-scale emigration of workers in information technologies and yet has been able to replace those skilled emigrants and create a service export industry (International Organization for Migration, 2005). In certain African countries, however, the emigration of skilled persons has led to shortages in key occupations. In South Africa, for instance, the Department of Health estimates that over a quarter of the vacancies for nurses could not be filled in 2001.

80. Countries of origin can also benefit from the return of migrants if they bring back skills or capital that they would not have acquired at home. In China, India and the Republic of Korea, returnees from the United States have been the main driving force for the growth of the software industry. However, other countries have been less successful in attracting back skilled and successful migrants. As the experience of Southern Europe indicates, the economic conditions of countries of origin need to improve so that the most enterprising migrants may return and use their skills to advantage. Lack of opportunities in the home country often prompt returning migrants to opt for retirement instead of continuing to work upon return (Ghosh, 2000).

81. Permanent return is not necessary for the transfer of knowledge and capital by migrants. While abroad, migrants can invest at home or generate flows of knowledge and information, and they may initiate new trade linkages with the country of origin. Improvements in information and communications systems have made it easier and cheaper for migrants to maintain links with the country of origin and, in general, to build transnational networks.[6] Governments are increasingly relying on the potential of migrant communities abroad to promote economic development. In addition to promoting permanent return, an increasing number of Governments are fostering links with expatriates and facilitating temporary returns. Several international organizations have developed programmes to support such initiatives. Between 1977 and 1997, for instance, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme, placed about 5,000 qualified professionals on temporary assignments in 49 developing countries. Through its Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) programme, the International Organization for Migration is also facilitating temporary visits by qualified expatriates.

82. Although China, India and the Republic of Korea have benefited from their emigrants and the descendants of those emigrants, other countries do not seem to have gained much from the activities of expatriate communities (Lucas, 2005). The existence of stable institutions is a prerequisite for the engagement by those abroad in the development process of the countries of origin. Furthermore, migrants can make best use of economic opportunities at home if international mobility is facilitated by both countries of origin and countries of destination. A secure legal status at destination, with work and residence permits allowing for temporary absences, and the recognition of dual citizenship by the countries concerned are some of the measures needed for circulation to take place.

V. International migration policies

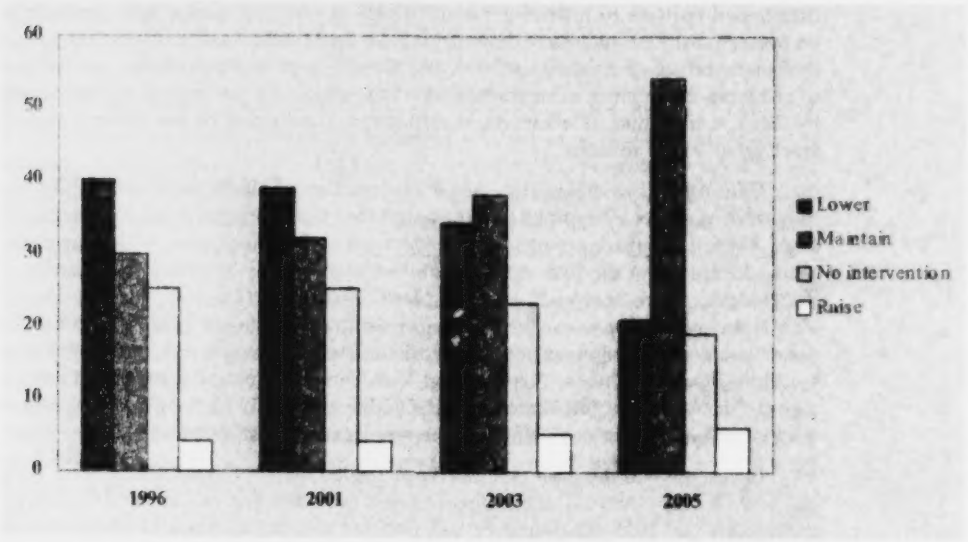
83. Substantial changes in government perceptions of migration trends have taken place since 1990 as Governments around the world react to the challenges and opportunities associated with international migration. In 1996, the proportion of

Governments having the goal of reducing the inflows of migrants peaked at 40 per cent (United Nations, 2004). Since then, the proportion of Governments reporting that they wish to reduce migrant inflows has fallen almost by half; and over the past decade, the Governments of many receiving countries have been actively adopting or amending laws and regulations so as to facilitate the inflow of the types of migrants they need, especially skilled migrants and temporary low-skilled workers. Concomitantly, measures to prevent and combat clandestine inflows have increased in number and are being strengthened. In addition, the proportion of Governments wishing to lower emigration has remained at about 25 per cent since 1986, and countries of origin have become more active in encouraging the return of their citizens from abroad and in strengthening links with their expatriate communities so as to harness the potential contributions of those communities to propelling development. The present section reviews the changing attitudes of Governments regarding immigration and emigration and discusses developments in the policy arena with respect to specific types of inflows.

A. Government views on levels of immigration and emigration

84. Since the mid-1990s, Governments are increasingly reporting that they wish to maintain their levels of immigration and are less inclined to take action to restrict those levels (United Nations, 2006). As of 2005, only 22 per cent of countries wanted to lower immigration, down from 40 per cent in 1996 (see figure). Furthermore, the proportion of countries seeking to maintain the prevailing level of immigration rose from 30 per cent in 1996 to 54 per cent in 2005, whereas the proportion seeking to raise levels remained constant at about 5 per cent. While in 1996 one quarter of all countries had reported no intervention with respect to immigration, one fifth did so in 2005. These mostly include countries in Africa that are experiencing net emigration and whose borders are difficult to supervise.

Government policies on immigration, 1996, 2001, 2003 and 2005



Source: *World Population Policies, 2005*, Sales No. E.06.XIII.5.

85. Among the 78 countries wishing to lower immigration in 1996, 35 now report that they wish to maintain their current level, 7 that they are not planning any intervention to modify immigration levels, and 5 that they seek to increase immigration. The remaining 31 continue to pursue the goal of lowering immigration. These changes of view reflect an improved understanding of the consequences of international migration and a growing recognition on the part of Governments of the need to manage migration instead of restricting it. They also reflect the persistence of labour shortages in certain sectors; the increasing regional harmonization of migration policies; the expanding global economy; and reactions to long-term trends in population ageing.

86. The trend away from restricting immigration is more pronounced among developed countries, 60 per cent of which had wished to lower immigration in 1996, but only 12 per cent of which wished to do so in 2005. Today, just six developed countries wish to reduce immigration: Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Romania. Despite having this goal, Denmark, France and the Netherlands hope to admit more skilled workers, while Italy promotes the admission of migrant workers on a temporary basis. Four developed countries — Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation — promote immigration actively so as to increase the number of admissions in line with national needs.

87. Among developing countries, the proportion with policies to lower immigration has also declined: from one third in 1996 to one quarter in 2005. In Latin America and the Caribbean, only four countries report that they wish to restrict migration inflows: the Bahamas, Belize, Ecuador and Panama. In Asia, the continent with the highest proportion of countries reporting that they wish to lower immigration, changes of views have been very recent. Thus, whereas in 2003 half of

all countries in Asia had wished to lower immigration, by 2005 only one third said they wished to do so. Member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council have long maintained policies to restrict migrant inflows in order to reduce their dependence on foreign workers and have been trying to foster increased employment among their nationals. For instance, in 2003, the Government of Saudi Arabia set the goal of reducing the number of migrant workers to at most 20 per cent of the population by 2013, a goal that, if achieved, would mean a reduction of the current migrant stock by at least 3 million.

88. With respect to emigration, about one quarter of all Governments report that they wish to lower emigration, a proportion that has remained virtually unchanged since 1986. Fifty-three countries are concerned about emigration, with four noting their concern about the loss of highly skilled workers. By contrast, 11 countries — Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Viet Nam and Yemen — seek to increase emigration (United Nations, 2006). The major countries of origin of migrant workers, such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam, have established special units to manage worker migration and protect the rights and safety of their migrants abroad (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2004).

89. In response to the high emigration of skilled workers, particularly from small and low-income countries, their Governments have adopted initiatives to encourage their return. In 2005, 72 countries had policies and programmes to encourage the return of their nationals, up from 59 in 1996. Among those 72 countries, 59 were developing countries (United Nations, 2006). Of particular importance has been the emigration of medical personnel from countries that sorely need them. Measures to retain such skilled personnel are also being developed.

90. Given the importance of remittances for the economies of many countries of origin, their Governments have been implementing policies to increase remittance flows, promote transfers through formal channels, reduce the cost of transfers, and channel remittances into productive investment. The measures taken include tax exemptions on remittances income, improved access to banking services for senders and receivers of remittances, cooperation with countries of destination to allow domestic banks to operate overseas and reduction of duties on goods sent home by migrants (World Bank, 2006). In addition, Governments of countries of origin have been active in encouraging migrants abroad to channel remittances into projects in their communities of origin. For instance, in Mexico, the local, State and federal authorities provide a 3-for-1 match for every dollar that communities abroad provide for the financing of community projects (United Nations, 2004).

91. Lastly, an important way of maintaining ties with expatriates has been to allow dual citizenship. In 2002, some 35 countries recognized dual citizenship. In recent years, India, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and the Philippines, all major sources of migrants, have adopted legislation allowing dual citizenship.

B. Policies on the admission of highly skilled migrants

92. An increasing number of countries favour the admission of migrants with needed skills to satisfy demand in the science and technology sectors of their economies. Some 30 countries, including 17 developed countries, have policies or programmes to promote the admission of highly skilled workers (United Nations,

2006); that is to say, few developing countries have policies to encourage skilled migration, although their needs for skilled personnel, especially in management or engineering, are substantial. Furthermore, five developing countries — Bhutan, Botswana, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — report that they wish to reduce the inflow of skilled foreign workers in order to improve the employment prospects for their nationals.

93. Countries of immigration have long had policies favouring the admission of skilled immigrants. In Australia and Canada, applicants for permanent residence are selected on the basis of a point system that assigns higher scores to persons with degrees or diplomas acceptable in Australia and at least three years of work experience; in Canada, higher scores are assigned to individuals with upper-secondary or university education. Since 1965, the United States has had an employment-based preference to accommodate the admission of immigrants with needed skills; the ceiling for visas in that category was raised to 140,000 annually by the Immigration Act of 1990. Moreover, the United States has several visa categories allowing the temporary admission of skilled personnel. The largest numbers are admitted under the H-1B programme whose ceiling of 65,000 beneficiaries established by the Immigration Act of 1990 had been raised to 115,000 for fiscal years 1999 and 2000, and then to 195,000 for fiscal years 2001-2003 before it reverted to 65,000 (United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2002). In Australia, the Government increased the ceiling for immigration in 2002 and allocated a large part of that increase to the skills category (United Nations, 2003). In New Zealand, the Government amended in 2003 the selection criteria for skilled immigrants so as to better match its needs and took measures to facilitate the transition of skilled migrant workers from temporary to permanent status.

94. Since 1990, several European countries have relaxed restrictions on the admission of highly skilled workers. In France, the immigration law of 1998 created a special status for scientists and scholars and eased the conditions for the admission of highly skilled workers in information technology. In Germany, a special programme allowing the recruitment of foreign workers in information technology had been started in August 2000 and was extended to the end of 2004. The 2004 Immigration Act then eased conditions for the recruitment of certain categories of skilled workers and for their permanent settlement. It also allowed the admission of foreign investors. In the United Kingdom, a trial programme introduced early in 2002 allows highly skilled foreign workers to enter the country to seek employment for up to a year. In 2003, the Czech Republic started a project to recruit highly skilled foreign workers using a points system. Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom offer various tax abatements or exemptions to skilled migrants (United Nations, 2003). Lastly, EU adopted in 2005 a directive on the recognition of professional qualifications to promote the mobility of skilled personnel within the Union (Council of the European Union, 2005).

95. In Asia, several countries have also taken measures to promote the inflow of skilled migrants: Japan relaxed restrictions on the admission of engineers and other specialists; the Republic of Korea revised its immigration law to facilitate the entry of professionals and technicians; and Singapore modified its regulations to allow well-educated foreigners with good earning potential to apply for permanent residence (United Nations, 2003).

C. Policies on the admission of low-skilled migrants

96. Labour shortages have been common not only at the high end of the occupational hierarchy, but also at the low end where, in prosperous and dynamic economies, native workers shun jobs that are difficult or demanding or carry little prestige. Governments have been addressing labour shortages in low-skilled sectors of the economy (for example, agriculture, construction, hospitality and domestic services, etc.) by developing temporary worker programmes. These programmes usually allow the admission of low-skilled foreign workers for fixed periods of time under temporary labour contracts. Some programmes set quotas or limits on the number of admissions per year and admission is contingent on proving that there are no citizens willing to take a given job.

97. Several countries in Asia admit large numbers of migrant workers under temporary worker programmes. All the Gulf Cooperation Council countries plus Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand have policies to admit low-skilled migrants. The employment and stay of migrant workers in those countries are usually regulated through the issuance of work permits tied to a particular employer. In Europe, the Russian Federation enacted in 2002 a law allowing the issuance of work permits for persons wishing to work for up to one year as well as permits for temporary residents who can stay and work up to three years. In Africa, South Africa uses bilateral agreements to manage the temporary admission of migrant workers from neighbouring countries who are needed by the mining sector.

98. Although the bulk of international labour migration occurs outside the channels created by bilateral agreements, at least 176 bilateral agreements on various forms of labour mobility were in force in 2003 in OECD countries (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2004). The forms of mobility covered by agreements include international movements of cross-border workers, seasonal workers, contract and project-linked workers, guest workers, trainees and working holiday makers. Some agreements refer to recruitment of workers for a particular sector (for example, agriculture) or to workers in a particular occupation (for example, nurses or caregivers). With the opening of the borders of Eastern European countries, the number of bilateral labour agreements in the region increased fivefold in the early 1990s. More recently, Italy, Portugal and Spain, responding to labour shortages, have been concluding a new wave of bilateral agreements. Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Spain are the countries in Europe with the largest number of labour agreements (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2004). Most of Germany's agreements are with Eastern European countries, while those of Spain are with Latin American countries. Despite the rising number of labour agreements and of countries involved, the volume of labour migration under existing agreements remains relatively small.

99. A number of developed countries have special programmes for the admission of low-skilled workers. Canada, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States are among the countries having seasonal worker programmes, mainly to satisfy labour demands in agriculture. In addition, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have programmes to allow young citizens of selected countries to travel and work within the host country for periods that can last for one or two years (working holiday maker programmes). These young migrants are most likely to find temporary jobs in low-skilled occupations. Similarly, the

admissions of trainees by Japan and the Republic of Korea are used to address labour shortages in low-skilled occupations.

100. Countries experiencing labour shortages sometimes respond by tolerating the presence of migrants in an irregular situation. Both developed and developing countries have found themselves in this situation and several have responded by undertaking regularization programmes to provide the migrants concerned with security of status and to gain control over the management of labour migration.

D. Policies on family reunification

101. Most receiving countries have provisions allowing family reunification under certain conditions. Although the legal basis for family reunion is set out in international instruments establishing an individual's right to family life and in national legislation, the interpretation of what constitutes family reunification and the determination of the conditions under which it is permissible vary among countries. Generally, a fundamental distinction is made between temporary migrants and those with long-term residence. Foreigners granted temporary permission to stay, work or study are usually not allowed to bring in their families, unless they are highly skilled (SOPEMI, 2001). Only migrants with longer-term and secure residence rights are granted permission to bring in their families. There is also considerable variation regarding the family members allowed to reunite. Usually, they include spouses and minor children only. Furthermore, in order to prevent the use of marriages of convenience to abuse family reunification provisions, restrictions are often put on the length of the marriage or the minimum age of spouses, and a minimum period of cohabitation may be required. It is also common to require that the sponsor show solvency or earn a wage above a certain minimum.

102. In recent years, concern about the fraudulent use of family reunification provisions has led to the tightening of rules on family reunification. Ireland, for instance, has restricted the ability of foreign parents of children born in Ireland to apply for residence permits. The Netherlands has increased both the minimum age of spouses from 18 to 21 years and the minimum wage that the sponsor must earn. In Denmark, Danish citizens must prove solvency and post a bond to bring in their foreign spouses and both spouses must be at least 24 years of age. Norway has also increased the minimum wage needed to prove solvency; and in France, reuniting spouses are granted initially a residence permit for five years, while cohabitation for two years is required in order for long-term residence to be granted. Switzerland also requires that foreign spouses of Swiss citizens remain five years in a temporary status before they can become eligible for permanent residence. In contrast to these changes towards greater restrictiveness, Canada relaxed some of its family reunification provisions in 2002 by increasing to 22 years the maximum age for dependent children and reiterating that parents and common-law spouses were eligible for family reunification.

103. Although some of the changes listed have resulted in lower levels of migration for family reunification over the short run, it is unlikely that this type of migration will cease to be important, especially since the number of marriages between persons of different citizenships increases with rising migration and travel among young single persons, and since migration for family reunification constitutes a response to the sex imbalances in certain countries.

E. Policies on migrant integration and naturalization

104. Receiving countries are increasingly adopting policies that focus on the integration of migrants. In 2005, 75 countries reported programmes designed to integrate non-nationals, up from 52 countries in 1996 (United Nations, 2006). Integration policies are found in 37 developed countries and 38 developing countries. The integration programmes of developed countries generally recognize and promote the benefits that diversity brings to their society. Integration initiatives recognize the importance of avoiding all types of discrimination and generally include provisions to protect the religious freedom of migrants. Recognizing that integration proceeds better if migrants have a good command of the local language, receiving countries often provide special language training and courses on local mores and culture. Some countries require proof of language ability and other elements of successful integration before admitting migrants in the first place and allowing family reunification.

105. A major source of concern regarding the integration prospects of migrant communities is the poor academic performance of the second generation and the greater likelihood of unemployment and welfare dependency among migrants than among non-migrants. In EU, for instance, unemployment levels among foreigners are almost twice as high as those among EU citizens (European Commission, 2004). To improve the labour-market performance of migrants, several receiving countries have language and vocational training programmes, often focusing specifically on migrant women who tend to have greater limitations in respect of finding jobs. In addition, countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden have programmes offering incentives to employers to hire the long-term unemployed, which have proved beneficial to migrants.

106. Generally, foreigners do not enjoy the same rights as citizens. Hence, acquiring the citizenship of the host country is a major step towards successful integration. Countries of immigration have traditionally allowed the relatively rapid naturalization of foreigners admitted as immigrants. In other countries, naturalization has not been seen as an automatic outcome. In recent years, Luxembourg, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Spain and Ukraine have eased the procedures for obtaining naturalization, at least for some groups of migrants. However, a number of European countries, including Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Netherlands, have made their naturalization provisions more restrictive by imposing language ability requirements; Italy has increased the length of residence required and Ireland has discontinued the practice of granting the right of citizenship to any person born in Ireland.

F. Refugee and asylum policies

107. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[7] and the 1967 Protocol thereto[8] are the major international instruments determining policies towards refugees. By October 2005, 140 States had ratified both instruments and another 6 had ratified only one of them. There were 41 new ratifications during 1990-2004, with 21 occurring during 1990-1994. The high number of ratifications during the early 1990s had resulted from the accession of several newly independent States in Europe and Asia, many of which were experiencing significant forced migration at the time. Most refugees are hosted by States parties to the 1951 Convention or the

1967 Protocol thereto (84 per cent in early 2004). Among the 147 countries hosting refugees in 2004, 123 were parties to the international instruments relating to refugees.

108. Since 1990, Governments have been successful in finding solutions to the plight of long-standing refugee populations. During 1990-2004, 21 million refugees were able to return to their countries of origin, generally with the assistance of UNHCR. In addition, 1.7 million refugees were resettled in third countries. With durable solutions consistently exceeding new refugee outflows in recent years, the number of refugees under UNHCR mandate dropped from 15.9 million in 1990 to 9.2 million by 2005.

109. The rising number of asylum applications in developed countries, particularly since the late 1980s, has led to a succession of policy changes. In Europe, EU member States had tried to tighten external borders while relaxing internal border controls under the Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement (1990) and the Treaty of Maastricht (entry into force 1993). Carrier sanctions, first adopted in 1987 by Germany and the United Kingdom, had become standard in developed countries by 2000. The Schengen countries extended visa requirements to a common list of countries (73 in 1993 and 150 by 1998). The 1990 Dublin Convention prevented asylum-seekers from lodging applications in several countries by determining which State should process each application. In 1992, at a ministerial meeting held in London, EU member States agreed to apply the concept of "safe third country" which allowed them to refuse the asylum claims of persons who had transited over countries where asylum could have been sought. Similarly, a list of "safe countries of origin" was established and used to expedite asylum claims from citizens of those countries, who were presumed to be at a very low risk of persecution. Between 1991 and 1998, developed countries, particularly in Europe, introduced policy packages including these measures.

110. Since 1999, there has been a concerted effort to harmonize asylum policies across EU. The first stage of this process culminated in April 2004 with the adoption of measures designed to identify a single member State responsible for each asylum claim (Dublin II and Eurodac regulations) and the introduction of three directives establishing minimum standards relating to temporary protection, reception of asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2005). Several EU member States have also adopted measures to limit social benefits to asylum-seekers whose applications have been rejected and to facilitate their return.

G. Policies to address irregular migration

111. Migrants with an irregular status are those who enter a country without proper authorization or who have violated the terms of stay of the authorization they hold, including by overstaying. Governments may return or deport foreigners whose status is irregular. Some Governments have concluded readmission agreements to ensure that foreigners in an irregular status who lack proper documentation validating their origin are nevertheless admitted by countries of origin if they are expelled. Also used are bilateral agreements between receiving countries and those through which migrants transit to ensure the cooperation of the latter in trying to stop the flow. Turkey and several countries in Northern Africa have become transit

points for growing numbers of persons from Asia and sub-Saharan Africa trying to enter EU clandestinely. Persons from all over the world trying to enter the United States clandestinely often transit through Mexico or countries in Central America or the Caribbean. Countries of transit are increasingly taking measures to intercept these migrants and prevent them from reaching their intended destination.

112. Concern about clandestine entry of foreigners has grown in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the bombings in Bali, Casablanca, Madrid and London. In response, Governments have introduced more stringent requirements for granting visas or have imposed visa requirements for nationals of countries that consistently produce unauthorized migrants. Growing numbers of countries are issuing machine-readable travel documents, passports with enhanced security features that are difficult to counterfeit and counterfeit-proof visa stamps, thus making it more difficult to tamper with official travel documents. In addition, Governments are increasingly sharing intelligence on suspected individuals and are enhancing cooperation in border control.

113. It is estimated that nearly half of the migrants who enter countries clandestinely do so through smuggling or trafficking (International Organization for Migration, 2003). According to the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,[9] "smuggling of migrants" means the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident (article 3 (a)). According to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,[10] "trafficking of persons" means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by improper means, such as force, abduction, fraud or coercion, for an improper purpose, like forced or coerced labour, servitude, slavery or sexual exploitation. Those organizing smuggling or trafficking activities range from small-scale operators who provide transport across borders to international criminal networks that provide the full range of services, including counterfeit documentation, transportation and assistance in crossing borders, and housing and illegal employment in receiving countries. Trafficked women, in particular, frequently find themselves forced into prostitution, marriage, domestic work, work in sweatshops and other forms of exploitation.

114. A major recent development has been the adoption by the General Assembly in 2000 of the protocols on smuggling and trafficking cited above and their widespread ratification. As a result of increasing awareness about the extent of smuggling and trafficking activities, many Governments have criminalized activities related to smuggling or trafficking that had not been considered crimes before. Furthermore, most receiving countries have either introduced new sanctions or increased the penalties for smugglers, migrants in an irregular situation, and persons who employ them.

H. Policies regarding student migration

115. Together with the increasing internationalization of education, the number of persons migrating in order to study abroad has been rising and developed countries

are the main destinations of migrant students. Although the data available on foreign students enrolled in institutions of higher education do not permit individuals who migrated in order to study to be distinguished from those who were raised in the country of study and are just completing their education therein, other evidence suggests that the presence of increasing numbers of foreign students in tertiary education owes much to migration for the purpose of studying abroad.

116. The United States stands out as the main destination for people seeking higher education abroad. In 2002, 583,000 foreign students were enrolled in accredited educational institutions at college level or higher. It is estimated that in 2001, 67 per cent of foreign students in the United States had covered their educational expenses from personal or family sources (United Nations, 2003). The majority of foreign students in the United States are from Asia or Europe.

117. Other countries with large populations of foreign students in higher education are Australia, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Although all of them recorded increases in the number of foreign students between 1990 and 2002, the increases were particularly impressive for Australia, Germany and the United Kingdom. Australia's rise as a major destination for foreign students stems from the Government's decision in the late 1980s to deregulate the educational sector, assist higher education institutions in establishing and marketing courses for overseas students, and easing visa restrictions for paying foreign students (United Nations, 2003). In addition, in 2002, Australian authorities simplified further the admission procedures for foreign students.

118. The rising number of foreign students in Germany, owes much to the large number of foreigners living there. Thus, about 15 per cent of all foreign students in Germany are Turkish citizens, most likely the descendants of workers from Turkey who arrived during previous waves of migration.

119. In the United Kingdom, rising foreign student enrolment is partly the result of EU agreements whereby EU citizens are entitled to lower tuition compared with students from other countries and receive financial assistance for study abroad. Because the demand for higher-level training in English is rising, British universities have proved particularly attractive to students from Southern European countries. Greece, in particular, accounts for 12 per cent of the foreign student population in the United Kingdom.

120. Although, in principle, foreign students are expected to return home upon completion of their studies, migration for education is often the first step towards settlement abroad. In the United States, a high proportion of foreign students completing doctoral studies intend to stay after graduation and adjustment of status has generally been possible. In Australia, where foreign students had to leave after graduation and remain abroad at least two years before applying for immigrant status, the Government had started allowing changes of status upon the completion of studies in 1999 and simplified the procedures involved in 2001. In the United Kingdom, as part of the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme launched in 2002, foreign students are allowed to apply for work permits upon graduation or completion of postgraduate training. Similarly, in Austria, France and the Republic of Korea, foreign students receiving degrees in information technology may adjust status, gain access to the labour market and apply for residence. In Germany, the 2004 Immigration Act allows foreign students to seek employment in Germany after graduation. In Canada, where adjustment of status of graduating students has

become possible, the Government is collaborating with universities and provincial administrations to attract more foreign students.

121. Although most foreign students are in developed countries, there are a few developing countries, such as Jordan, Lebanon, the Republic of Korea and Turkey in Asia and Mexico in Latin America, that attract significant numbers of foreign students. In addition, South Africa had 15,000 foreign students in 1998. Not only have these countries been hubs for the advanced training of students from countries in their respective regions, but there are other countries interested in expanding their training capabilities by building partnerships with prestigious universities and other institutions in developed countries. China, Singapore and Qatar are establishing local campuses run in partnership with universities abroad with the aim of both offering high-quality training to their citizens and becoming international training centres in their own right. Consequently, not only will migration for education increase but competition in this field may lead to a greater diversification of destinations, particularly for students from developing countries.

VI. Bilateral, regional and international initiatives on international migration

122. Intergovernmental cooperation is a key element in the set of strategies that Governments have at their disposal to realize the benefits of international migration or to address its drawbacks. That cooperation can occur at the bilateral, regional or multilateral level. The present chapter reviews the mechanisms used at each level to address migration issues.

A. Bilateral approach

123. Bilateral agreements are widely used to formalize cooperative arrangements regarding migration. As noted earlier, 176 bilateral agreements on labour migration have been concluded by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development member States. (OECD, 2004). In Latin America and the Caribbean, 84 bilateral agreements were signed between 1991 and 2000, over a half with countries in other regions (Mármora, 2003). Bilateral agreements aim to ensure that migrant flows take place in accordance with established rules and under conditions that are mutually beneficial to the countries involved. In addition to the bilateral agreements used to regulate flows of migrant workers, there are a growing number of agreements that relate to the readmission of migrants in an irregular situation by their country of origin, including those concluded recently between Germany and Albania and between Spain and Mauritania (SOPEMI, 2005). Readmission agreements have also been concluded between receiving countries and countries of transit, such as those between European countries and Morocco and Tunisia, establishing that these countries shall readmit expelled foreigners was transited through them (SOPEMI, 2005).

124. Lastly, some countries have concluded bilateral agreements to promote the safe and timely transfer of remittances. Canada, for instance, signed agreements with Caribbean countries allowing the automatic transfer of a portion of a worker's earnings to the family in the home country. In 2003, the Philippines and the United States exchanged a Memorandum of Understanding on Strengthening Remittance

Channels which is expected to reduce the costs of remittance transfers for Filipino migrants in the United States.

B. Regional approach

125. At the regional level, the drive towards economic integration has led to a number of regional agreements on free trade that have also dealt, on occasion, with some aspects of the movement of workers. EU is the most advanced regional group in this respect. Already the 1957 Treaty of Rome had included provisions for the free movement of workers among member States. In 1993, EU achieved free movement within the Union for all EU citizens. Yet, when 10 new member States joined the Union in 2004, restrictions were applied on the intra-Union mobility of their citizens during a transition period due to end in 2011. In addition to regulating the movement of EU citizens within its borders, EU has been forging partnerships with countries of origin; formulating a common European asylum policy; and fostering the equitable treatment of third-country nationals residing in member States.

126. Agreements to facilitate the movement of persons or workers have been part of the regulatory framework establishing common markets or free trade groups in other regions of the world, but none is so advanced as those of EU. Examples include the protocols on the free movement of persons of the Economic Community of West African States and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community which have not been implemented. In Asia, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum adopted a business travel card to facilitate business travel. In the Americas, the Southern Common Market has adopted instruments to facilitate movement of tourists and business travellers between State parties; and the North American Free Trade Agreement has provisions for the issuance of special visas for skilled workers from State parties (International Labour Organization, 2004).

127. Another type of regional cooperation has arisen through consultative processes that have proliferated mostly since 1995. One of the first was the Intergovernmental Consultations on Asylum, Refugee and Migration Policies in Europe, North America and Australia established in 1985 to discuss asylum issues. The first regional process established in developing countries involved the countries of Central and Northern America and started with a meeting in Puebla, Mexico, in 1996. Today, there are two regional processes in the Americas, three in Asia and two in Africa. Europe has at least four (United Nations, 2004; International Organization for Migration, 2003). Most consultative processes provide a level of informality that facilitates dialogue and the exchange of information. By bringing together countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as delegates from different governmental departments, these processes foster coordination and cooperation not only internationally but also nationally. Although it is still too early to assess the impact of these processes, they appear to be successful in building common understandings and fostering cooperation.

C. International approach

128. International migration has been gaining relevance in the international agenda. In the 2002 report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for

further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General characterized international migration as one of the main issues on which the United Nations had to deepen its knowledge, sharpen its focus and act more effectively. The outcome document of the 2005 World Summit held during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly recognized the important nexus between international migration and development and called on Governments to deal with the challenges and opportunities that international migration presented to countries of origin, destination and transit.

129. Given their importance, international migration issues have been addressed by most of the United Nations conferences and summits held since 1990. The outcome documents adopted by these conferences, albeit non-binding, have contributed to shaping the normative framework around which country activities on international migration have developed. In particular, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (United Nations, 1995) provides a broad and comprehensive set of objectives and recommendations on international migration, one of which is to encourage cooperation and dialogue between countries of origin and countries of destination, so as to maximize the benefits of migration and increase the likelihood that it may have positive consequences for development.

130. The United Nations and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have also been active in the establishment of international legal norms and instruments related to international migration (table 8). These have dealt with a wide array of issues including the rights of migrant workers, the prevention of smuggling and trafficking, and the protection of refugees. There are three key instruments dealing with the protection and treatment of international migrant workers. ILO Convention No. 97, adopted in 1949, contains provisions to proscribe inequalities of treatment with respect to the employment of international migrants. It has been ratified by 43 countries. ILO Convention No. 143 of 1975 establishes that migrant workers should be entitled not only to equal treatment, but also to equality with regard to access to employment, trade union rights, cultural rights, and individual and collective freedoms. To date, 18 States have ratified this convention.

Table 8
Status of ratification of international legal instruments related to international migration

Instrument	*Year entered into force*	*Countries ratified*[a]	
		Number	*Percentage*[b]
Migrant workers			
1949 ILO Convention concerning Migration for Employment (Revised 1949) (No. 97)	1952	43	22
1975 ILO Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and the Treatment of Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) (No. 143)	1978	18	9
1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	2003	33	17

Instrument	Year entered into force	Countries ratified[a]	
		Number	Percentage[b]
Smuggling and trafficking			
2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children	2003	92	47
2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea	2004	81	42
Refugees			
1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees	1954	143	74
1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees	1967	143	74

[a] As of 7 October 2005, the number including non-member States of the United Nations and the Governments of Cook Islands and Niue.

[b] Of States Members of the United Nations.

131. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted in 1990,[11] is the third major instrument on migrant workers. It establishes the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms that all migrant workers and members of their families should enjoy, and establishes the rights of migrant workers in a regular situation. The Convention entered into force in 2003 and as of October 2005 had been ratified by 33 States, none of which was a major receiving country.

132. As mentioned above, there are two United Nations instruments focusing on irregular migration: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, both supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. These have been ratified by 92 and 81 States, respectively, and entered into force in 2003 and 2004, respectively. The first Protocol aims to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, to protect victims of such trafficking and to promote cooperation among State parties to meet these objectives. The second Protocol provides an effective tool with which to combat and prevent the smuggling of human beings, reaffirming that migration in itself is not a crime and that migrants may be victims in need of protection. The rapid and widespread ratification of these protocols proves that preventing irregular migration is a major goal of Member States.

133. Lastly, there are two international instruments that relate to the protection of refugees. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees establishes a definition of "refugee" and legal protection for refugees. It also prohibits the expulsion or forcible return of persons accorded refugee status. The 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees extends the application of the 1951 Convention to persons who became refugees after 1 January 1951. Both the Convention and the Protocol have been ratified by about three quarters of all Member States.

134. In 2003, the General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session, called for a High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development to be held in 2006. In its resolution 60/227, the Assembly decided that the High-level Dialogue would be held in New York on 14 and 15 September 2006. The High-level Dialogue is

expected to focus on the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development in order to identify appropriate ways and means to maximize its development benefits and minimize its negative impacts.

135. Among the global government initiatives to promote dialogue, provide guidelines for action, and enhance international cooperation in addressing the challenges posed by international migration, the Global Commission on International Migration has been key. It was launched with the support of a number of Governments to provide, inter alia, recommendations to the Secretary-General and other stakeholders on how to strengthen the national, regional and global governance of international migration. The Global Commission, composed of 19 expert commissioners serving in their personal capacity, launched its report and recommendations in October 2005 (Global Commission on International Migration, 2005). The recommendations of the Global Commission and the deliberations of the Commission on Population and Development at its thirty-ninth session will be important inputs for the High-level Dialogue of the General Assembly.

136. In sum, international cooperation on international migration has been growing. Since 1990, the number of bilateral agreements has increased markedly. Although processes of regional economic integration have not led to effective agreements on freedom of movement, they continue to provide a basis for further cooperation in this area. In addition, consultative processes have been established in most world regions and are proving effective in fostering dialogue and cooperation. At the global level, key international instruments to address clandestine migration were adopted and have been widely ratified, and the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families has entered into force. Lastly, the international community is preparing for the High-level Dialogue of the General Assembly on International Migration and Development and a government-led initiative, the Global Commission on International Migration, has already produced a set of principles and recommendations for consideration at the High-level Dialogue.

VII. Conclusions

137. **In 2005, the number of international migrants reached 191 million, nearly half of whom are female. Developed countries host 60 per cent of all international migrants (115 million) and, among them, females outnumber males. Just 28 countries host 75 per cent of all international migrants, with the United States being the major country of destination.**

138. **75 million international migrants lived in developing countries in 2005: 51 million in Asia, 17 million in Africa and 7 million in Latin America and the Caribbean. The number of migrants in developing countries has increased by barely 3 million since 1990. Return flows cancelled out new outflows over the period. Thus, during 1990-2004, 21 million refugees were repatriated, the majority to developing countries.**

139. **Migration to developed countries remained high during 1990-2005. The major increases in the number of international migrants occurred in Northern America (17 million) and Europe (15 million). Migration for family reunification accounted for an important share of the inflows to those regions, but the share of labour migration and skilled migration has been rising. In**

2000, 20 million of the international migrants aged 25 years or over in OECD countries had tertiary education.

140. **Because of low fertility, net migration accounts today for three quarters of the population growth in the more developed regions. If current trends continue, between 2010 and 2030 net migration will likely be responsible for all the population growth in those regions.**

141. **Although international migration can play a role in slowing population ageing and forestalling population reductions, it cannot reverse these processes unless its volume increases markedly. Net migration to Europe, for instance, would have to increase fourfold to maintain constant the size of the working-age population.**

142. **For receiving countries, the net economic impact of international migration is generally positive. Although the presence of international migrants may have a small adverse effect on the wages of non-migrants or may raise unemployment when wages are rigid, such effects are small at the national level. Over the medium and long term, migration can generate employment and produce net fiscal gains. Studies in rapidly ageing populations indicate that international migrants can contribute substantially to relieving the fiscal burden on future generations.**

143. **In 2004, official migrant remittances amounted to US$ 226 billion, US$ 160 billion of which went to developing countries. Remittances benefit the low- and middle-income families that receive them and enable migrant households to invest in income-generating activities. Remittances can alleviate foreign exchange constraints and reduce the cost of borrowing for countries of origin. Through migrant associations in receiving countries, funds may be pooled to support development projects in the communities of origin and by providing matching funds, Governments can enhance the development impact of such projects.**

144. **The emigration of skilled personnel can be detrimental to the development prospects of countries of origin, especially small developing countries losing high proportions of skilled citizens. However, skilled migrants who maintain ties with their countries of origin may stimulate the transfer of technology and capital. Countries of origin have become more proactive in encouraging the return of citizens living abroad and in maintaining ties with expatriate communities so as to harness the positive effects that migration can have on development. Seventy-two countries have policies to encourage the return of citizens, up from 59 in 1996.**

145. **Since 1996, the number of Governments wishing to reduce international migration has fallen by about half. Furthermore, the Governments of many receiving countries have been taking measures to facilitate the admission of skilled migrants and, as necessary, that of temporary low-skilled workers. Today, 30 countries have policies to promote the inflow of highly skilled workers.**

146. **In 2005, 75 countries had programmes to facilitate the integration of foreigners, up from 52 in 1996. More than three quarters of developed countries have integration policies, whereas less than a quarter of developing countries do so.**

147. Increasingly, Governments of receiving countries have been using temporary worker programmes to address their labour shortages. To that end, a large number of bilateral agreements have been concluded. Bilateral agreements have also been used to combat irregular migration, ensure the readmission of migrants trying to enter clandestinely, and facilitate the flow of remittances.

148. With the exception of those of the European Union, processes of regional economic integration have not resulted, as yet, in freedom of movement for workers. Responding to a need for increased dialogue on international migration issues, a number of regional consultative processes have been established and are proving useful in building common understandings and promoting cooperation.

149. Since 1990, 41 countries have ratified the international instruments relating to refugees. In 2003, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families had entered into force; and in 2004, the protocol against smuggling and that to prevent trafficking in persons, also entered into force, after having been adopted by the General Assembly in 2000.

150. At the global level, several initiatives have been launched to address the challenges posed by international migration, key among which is the Global Commission on International Migration, whose report and recommendations were issued in 2005. At the United Nations, the General Assembly has decided to conduct a High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in September 2006. The deliberations of the Commission on Population and Development will provide substantive input for the dialogue and contribute to fostering international cooperation in addressing international migration issues.

Notes

[1] For purposes of estimation, the effects of this event have been backdated to 1990.

[2] For a summary of empirical studies see Friedberg and Hunt (1995), Brücker (2002) and International Labour Organization (2004).

[3] Total remittances as reported by the World Bank include three types of transactions: workers' remittances, compensation of employees and migrants' transfers. The main source of these data is the Balance of Payments Statistics compiled by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). For countries that do not report remittance data to IMF, the World Bank produces estimates based on either data from central banks or information provided by World Bank country desks (World Bank, 2006).

[4] For a summary of findings on the impact of remittances on urban-rural disparities, see Jones (1998). For findings on their impact on inequalities among households, see Taylor (1999), Lucas (2005) and World Bank (2006).

[5] The data used in both studies lack information on natives of OECD countries living in non-OECD countries. While their number is likely to be small compared with the number of highly educated migrants living in OECD countries, the results should be interpreted with caution.

[6] The number of overseas associations, which are often key for the transfer of knowledge and capital, has increased rapidly in recent years. There are over 10,000 associations of Chinese professionals abroad, for instance. Organizing trips by professionals to China for short-term consultancies or for setting up enterprises is one of the main activities of these associations (Wescott, 2005).

[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[8] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

[9] General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex III.

[10] Ibid., annex II.

[11] General Assembly resolution 45/158, annex.

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